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Washington Whispers ®

[Items appearing on this page are being talked about in Washington or other news centers]

CPYRGHT

Robert Kennedy, New York Senator, and President Johnson are making an effort to get along well with one another. Senator Kennedy of late has had a number of flattering things to say about the President.

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Presidents often have planted with favorite reporters questions to be asked in news conferences. This process now is being carried further with an effort to find out what questions reporters themselves plan to ask.

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President Johnson is making a big play to foreign ambassadors in Washington, countering complaints that the White House had been slighting these representatives of governments abroad. Honor guards of marines, yacht trips, dinners, special audiences all play their part.

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Electronics experts are trying to find ways to cut down on the reading that must be done by the President and top State Department officials. The President is called on to absorb up to 150,000 words each week, while State Department officials are expected on many days to read the equivalent of a historical novel.

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Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale, before leaving for Vietnam on a mission of building a counterinsurgency movement there, was deluged with "several hundred" messages from volunteers who wanted to go with him—many from foreigners and college students.

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Robert McNamara, Defense Secretary, made his decision to recommend a manned orbiting laboratory in space—under Air Force direction—when it became clear that Russians are putting their main effort on possible military uses of space while U.S. has emphasized civilian uses.

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Now that armed Communists, in sizable numbers, have come to the surface in the Dominican Republic, a State Department official has this to say: "The Communists that so many newspapermen and editorial writers could not find last April and May are coming out publicly with Red flags on their shoulders, where everybody can see them. Maybe this will lead to less criticism of the U.S. use of troops to prevent a Red takeover."

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